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For Immediate Release

Beading Hobby Takes Off Across U.S.

Three industry surveys report growth in beaders

Loveland, Colo., December 13, 2006: Three craft industry surveys released in the last few years—The Interweave Press 2004 “The State of Beading” Industry Survey, The *Craftrends* 2006 Consumer Participation Survey, and The Craft & Hobby Association (CHA) 2005 Attitude and Usage Study—measured the purchasing habits of craft customers around the country. Although their methodologies and analysis differed, each reached one related conclusion: the beading hobby is taking off across the U.S.

The *Craftrends* 2006 Consumer Participation Survey, released in Dec. 2006

According to the *Craftrends* survey, for the fourth year in a row, beads and jewelry making had the greatest customer participation among all the “General Crafts” sectors, with **42 percent of all crafters now purchasing beads annually and 25 percent purchasing jewelry making supplies annually**. The survey reports growth in customer participation from 2006 to 2005 in both categories, each up five percent from a year ago. In 2004 the *Craftrends* survey reported that beading was its **fastest-growing sector among young people under age 35 and this age group continues to dominate the category**. The 2006 survey reports that participation in the 26-34 demographic skyrocketed from 17 percent in 2005 to a staggering 28 percent in 2006. The 35-44 age group also saw a high increase from 21 percent in 2005 to 29 percent in 2006, “which means the traditional crafting consumer—women aged 26-44—are perfect candidates for jewelry.” Don’t discount the 65+ group, though. They also saw a large increase from 10 percent in 2005 to 18 percent in 2006. *Craftrends* reports, “Jewelry making reaches out to all ages and incomes because everyone likes to wear something they made—or give a special gift of jewelry. Gift suppliers report that jewelry is the fastest-growing gift category, which makes it perfect for DIY, too.”

The Craft & Hobby Association 2005 Attitude & Usage Study: Crafts Industry

One of the key findings of the Craft & Hobby Association survey was that beading/jewelry making was the fourth most popular craft in the country based on participation rate:

TOP 5 Crafts Based on Participation Rate	% of Total Households	% of Crafting Households
Cross-stitch/Embroidery	15%	30%
Crocheting	12%	25%
Scrapbooking/Memory Crafts	12%	24%
Beading & Jewelry Making	11%	NA
Home Décor/Painting Accessorizing/Finishing	9%	19%

The Interweave Press 2004 “The State of Beading” Industry Survey

According to the Interweave Press 2004 “The State of Beading” Industry Survey, there are at least 550,000 active beaders in the U.S., spending about \$800 per person on beading supplies annually. More than one-third of beaders live in the West, with the highest concentration in California.

California has three or more times as many shops as any other state. At the end of 2003, California had 290 shops, with the next highest states Washington at 105 and Florida at 101. California also had the highest growth in the number of bead shops between 1997-2003, increasing its total number by 74 shops.

There are a number of theories about what is driving the growth in beaders and jewelry making enthusiasts. Bead retailers credit the growth in the number of Baby Boomers who have more time on their hands, the fashion attention on beaded jewelry, the overall cultural emphasis on creativity and handmade, and the critical mass of beaders encouraging converts as factors driving this growth.

Like many crafts that are experiencing resurgence in the marketplace, the appeal of beading may derive from the need to create something handmade and original in our stressed-out, technology-driven lives.

But beaders have different motivations than other hobbyists, like scrapbookers and needleartists, who often practice their craft for the social component. The Interweave Press survey found that **beaders are more independent** and often do it as a solo activity, although they may first learn the craft in a group setting. In addition, the survey concluded that more than half of all **beaders are entrepreneurs** and sell their work out of their homes, on the Internet, at local boutiques, and even into department stores.

If they're not selling their creations, beaders are giving them away. Jewelry is by far the favorite type of project and about 54 percent of **beaders create jewelry to give as gifts**.

“I think more people are getting involved in beading because they enjoy the creative process and working with their hands. And because it doesn't take much time to finish a project—basic earrings can be made in 5-10 minutes, necklaces in less than an hour—beaders naturally want to give their work away. So they can keep on beading and buying more beads,” said *Beadwork* magazine Editor Marlene Blessing.

Growth in Bead Retail

Perhaps the most compelling reason beading is taking off is the easier access to beading classes and supplies at quality bead shops and mass-market retailers.

While the industry had too few players to count in the 1990s, The Interweave Press “The State of Beading” survey says that there are now about 1,800 independent bead supply stores in the United States, representing 41% growth since 1997, and growing at a rate of 1-2 per week around the country.

This is not counting the craft store chains, mass-market retailers and office supply stores that sell beading materials. These days, you need look no further than Target or Wal-Mart to find bead supplies, as mass-market retailers are devoting more space to beading supplies.

SOURCE: Interweave Press LLC

WEBSITES: www.interweave.com, www.crafttrends.com, www.craftandhobby.org

For more information or complete copies of the surveys mentioned in this release contact:
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